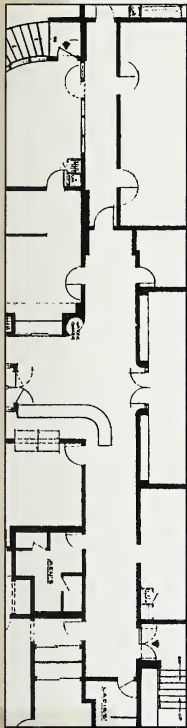


PLANNING DEPARTMENT 2000 ANNUAL REPORT



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2000 ANNUAL REPORT
SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT
JULY 1999-JUNE 2000

Planning Department Mission and Vision Statement

The San Francisco Planning Department is dedicated to guiding the orderly and prudent use of land, in both the natural and built environment, with the purposes of improving the quality of life and embracing the diverse perspectives of those who live in, work in and visit San Francisco.

The Planning Department will, through the General Plan and its implementation, foster and create a beautiful, prosperous, environmentally sustainable, culturally enriching City responsive to the needs of a highly diverse community.

The Planning Department will dispatch its duties and carry out its mandates toward the long-term planning and development of the City such that the City will provide space for a healthy and diverse economy; jobs for residents of all skills levels; safe, pleasant, affordable and accessible housing that is responsive to various family, cultural and life style needs, effective transportation, health care and community facilities; safe and pleasant parks, streets and neighborhoods; and life-long education and training, arts, culture and recreation. In doing so, the Planning Department will:

- Maintain an effective, efficient and responsive professional planning organization for San Francisco to provide long range planning, facilities planning and strategic planning, research and implementation services;
- Maintain a current General Plan as the basis for incremental decisions responsive to changing aspirations, opportunities, needs, and circumstances in pursuit of the Department's Mission and Vision;
- Maintain a current and simplified zoning ordinance and other implementation mechanisms in support of the General Plan and integrate long range planning with implementation;
- Provide up to date information services to the Mayor, Board of Supervisors, City agencies, organizations and the public on the City's demographics, economics, infrastructure, services, development projects and trends;

- Continue to deliver efficient and effective permit application services;
- Respond to opportunities and anticipated change, provide analysis, forecasting and policy making services to all agencies, organizations and the public on land use, economics, infrastructure, urban livability, demographics and cultural trends, and other aspects of City life;
- Insure broad public participation in planning decisions;
- Coordinate and unify strategies for implementation/advancement of the City's Vision and Mission;
- Emphasize public service, efficiency, convenience and fairness for all public services and activities; and
- Provide leadership role in collaborative regional planning and implementation activities.

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

As vested by the Charter, the Planning Commission is the decision-making authority for the Planning Department. The Department as a whole serves as staff to the Commission. All major projects completed by staff are reviewed by the Director or Zoning Administrator. Many items must be presented to the Commission for a decision, recommendation to another body, or for information and comment to staff.

The Department is organized into five operating divisions: Neighborhood Planning, Citywide Policy and Analysis, Major Environmental Analysis, Information Services and Administration. Overall management of these operating divisions and policy direction are carried out by Department Senior Management, which consists of the Director, Zoning Administrator, Three Chiefs of Neighborhood Planning, Chief of Citywide Policy and Analysis, Chief of Environmental Analysis, Chief of Information Services and Chief of Administration.

Department Management and Administration has a total staff of ten. Its primary objectives are to assure sound management, efficient use of departmental resources, efficient operations to assure optimum public services, and to provide administrative support to the operating divisions to strengthen their capacity to meet program objectives.

In addition to the Department wide management activities, services performed by the Administration Unit

include Fiscal Management such as accounting and budgeting Department funds, including general fund, work order, and Grant funds, preparing the Department's annual budget, and providing income and expenditure reports as well as status reports as a basis for management decisions. Also the responsibility of Administration is the Department's Human Resources function which includes staff recruitment, employee relations and other personnel related services. Further activities of the unit include development of the annual work program, development of operational efficiencies, monitoring program objectives, and operations and maintenance of the Department's physical facilities and equipment and provide various support services to the department.

Administration has developed and implemented an Equal Employment Opportunity Policy to ensure diversity in the workplace, and for budgetary and staff recruitment purposes a formalized position control and tracking report has been developed.

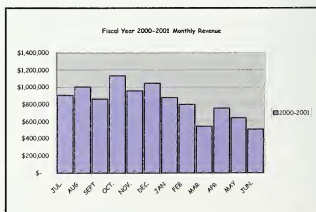
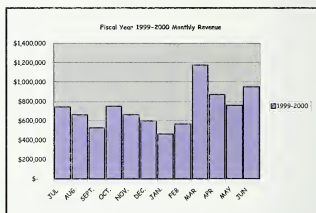
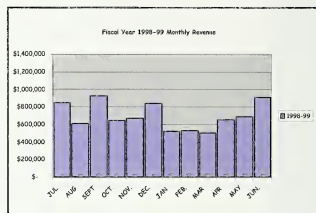
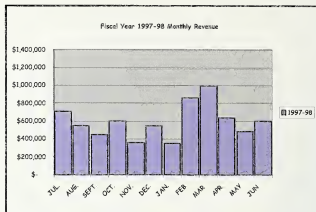
Support to Commission

The Planning Commission Secretary, along with support staff, provides all support to the Commission including conducting and attending all weekly Commission meetings. Beginning in F/Y 99/00 the Planning Commission hearings are televised live on City Scope and video taped for public review. Some of the services provided to the Commission include, preparing calendars, minutes, and summaries and public outreach and services for Planning Commission related matters.

Economic Growth in San Francisco and Planning Department Fiscal Status

Because of the City's economic growth, the Department experienced a major increase in fee revenues and ad valorem funding. The Department's total funding in F/Y 99/00 was \$12.7 million representing a 50.8% increase compared to prior F/Y 98/99 of \$8.4 million. The budgeted General Fund tax support, which was \$1.9 million in FY 98-99, has been increased annually to the FY 99-00 funding level of \$3.3 million.

In FY 1999/2000 the Planning Department received its first increase in general funds in more than ten years, this increase amounted to a 33% growth in the departments funding sources. The increased allocation of 19 additional positions and 1.3 million dollars was earmarked for a multi-year effort to stimulate investments in housing production where adequate transit infrastructure exists. To house the growing department an increase expense was incurred with the development of a satellite office at 30 Van Ness for the Environmental Review Division was established. This relocation effort involved the negotiation of a new lease along with tenant improvements, network upgrades and enhancements which has contributed to a seamless operation between the two sites.



DEPARTMENT-WIDE OBJECTIVES FOR FY 2000-2001

The Planning Department's primary objectives in the year FY 2000-2001 is:

(1) Increase Housing in San Francisco

It is clear that the Bay Area will not be able to sustain its current economic growth unless the critical need for housing is effectively addressed. By undertaking initiatives to remove impediments for housing construction, San Francisco can not only attract and accommodate its "fair share" of the region's projected growth, but it can take the lead in advocating socially and environmentally responsible growth, through which benefits will accrue to all strata of society.

(2) Address "Quality of Life" Issues

As the number of jobs and residents in San Francisco increases, it is critical that "quality of life" issues such as traffic congestion and land use compatibility be addressed, and that the character of San Francisco's neighborhoods be preserved or enhanced.

(3) Increase Efficiency & Accessibility to Services

Housing production, neighborhood preservation, economic development, and all other planning issues inherent in the Department's Mission statement will benefit from increasingly efficient service delivery. Over the last two years, the Department has expanded its staff, and undertaken efforts to ensure that all staff is adequately trained and has adequate support to fulfill their roles as efficiently as possible.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING 1999-2000

Description, Function, Accomplishments, Goals

The Neighborhood Planning Unit has chief responsibility for the review, approval and/or certification of individual development proposals submitted by property owners, developers, architects or project sponsors. Neighborhood Planning Teams review and act upon approximately 3350 building permits and approximately 1000 planning cases a year which may range in size and complexity from simple modifications of a single-family home to construction of a major high-rise building complex.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING TEAMS

Geographically-Based Teams

The Neighborhood Planning Unit is organized into five teams. Four of the teams have responsibility for designated quadrants of the City: Northwest, Northeast, Southeast and Southwest. The major functions of the four geographically-based Neighborhood Planning Teams involve the administration and enforcement of the City's General Plan and the Planning Code, the zoning ordinance of San Francisco which defines districts reserved for different uses, primarily residential, commercial or industrial. Additionally, the Planning Code and accompanying Zoning Map provide standards for the height and mass of buildings, size of yards and open space, off-street parking requirements, sign limitations, landmark preservation standards and procedures for amending and appealing actions by the Planning Department and the Planning Commission. Each Team is responsible for all building permit review and case activi-

ties with the geographic limits of the designated quadrant. In addition, the Teams assist the Zoning Administrator in responding to letters of determination and provide information to prospective project applicants during the project review process.

Tactical Team

The fifth team, the Tactical Team (TAC), has responsibility for assisting the geographically-based teams in completing a demanding workload and working on a variety of special projects that are not assigned to the quadrant teams. The contributions of the TAC Team are more fully described later in this report in the sections titled: Planning Code Enforcement, Neighborhood Outreach and Education, Permit Standardization and Streamlining, Updating and Expanding Citywide Residential Design Guidelines, and Conduct and Expand a Staff Training Program.

Zoning Administrator

Under the City Charter, the Zoning Administrator is responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the Planning Code, as well as its interpretation. He is also responsible for the review and approval of applications under Section 305 for Variances from the Planning Code and he is the Departmental and the Planning Commission representative on a weekly basis before the Board of Appeals. The Zoning Administrator meets with staff and the public on a daily basis to provide oral interpretations of the applicability of Planning Code provisions. The Zoning Administrator also provides written determinations of the Planning Code.

Each work activity of the Neighborhood Planning Division is described.

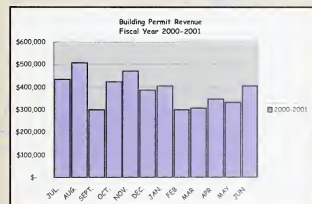
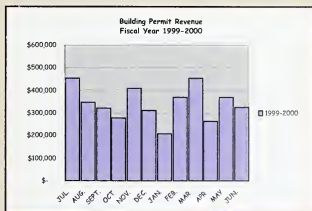
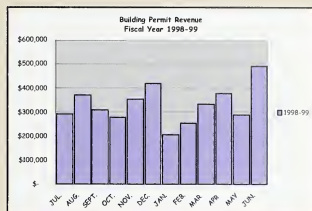
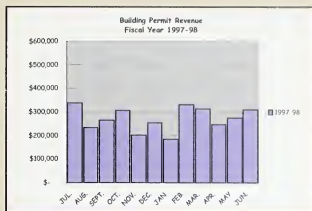
PERMIT REVIEW

Building Permit Review

Neighborhood Planning staff reviews building permit applications, submitted to the Department of Building Inspection, for compliance with the Planning Code. These permit applications consist of new buildings and alterations to existing structures resulting in physical expansion or change in use, demolition permits, sign applications and grading requests. Substantial staff effort is expended in counseling applicants on providing plans which meet Code standards and which comply with the Residential Design Guidelines. Building permit review is one of the major points of interaction between staff and project sponsors, architects, developers, homeowners, neighborhood groups and concerned citizens. Neighborhood Planning staff reviews approximately 3350 building permit applications annually. The 311 process of public notification is required on projects proposing exterior alterations or changes in use and accounts for notifications in approximately 45% of the building permits reviewed by Neighborhood Planning staff.

Variance Application Review

By City Charter directive, the Zoning Administrator may allow variances from the strict application of the quantitative standards of the Planning Code. In FY '99-'00, the Zoning Administrator conducted public hearings on 136 variance application requests. Because the Zoning Administrator often attaches conditions to variance approvals, Neighborhood Planning staff devotes significant time to resolving neighborhood concerns through the vari-



ance process. The variance application process allows the subsequent building permit review to proceed more smoothly and may avert the need for discretionary review.

Planning Commission Case Preparation and Review

Neighborhood Planning staff provides major support to the Planning Commission for the preparation and review of cases required by the Planning Code to be in conformity with the General Plan. Besides the predominate types of cases mentioned below, Neighborhood Planning staff is responsible for other cases which need public hearings before the Planning Commission including: reclassifications (rezonings), Planning Code text amendments, and a variety of specialized permit reviews that are required by the Planning Code for the implementation of the Downtown Plan. Preparation for hearings on cases to be heard by the Planning Commission requires staff to: (1) maintain records, (2) conduct investigations and make field trips to properties, (3) provide adequate public notices of the hearing through postings of the subject site, newspaper advertisements and mailings, (4) consult with project sponsors, community groups and citizens on procedures and issues, (5) prepare case reports, memoranda and draft resolutions and motions, (6) present cases and recommendations to the Commission, (7) prepare final Commission resolutions and motions, (8) transmit case materials, as required, to the Board of Supervisors or Board of Appeals and (9) make any necessary presentations at Board hearings. The most

common types of cases are discussed below.

Conditional Use Authorizations

Conditional use authorizations require approval by the Planning Commission subject to specific Planning Code criteria which include findings that the proposed use is necessary or desirable for, and compatible with, surrounding development. Conditional use authorizations include institutional expansions of hospitals and other residential or commercial facilities, large scale residential projects, churches and child care facilities, board and care facilities, and social service facilities in residential areas. Neighborhood Commercial Districts also require conditional use authorization reviews for expansions, changes of use or establishment of certain uses in neighborhood commercial districts. In FY '99-'00, Neighborhood Planning processed 183 conditional use authorization reviews and 22 reviews relating to Downtown Plan implementation (12 Section 321 cases and 10 Exceptions to Downtown Controls, Section 309).

Discretionary Reviews

The Planning Commission has discretion over all building permit applications and, from time to time, reviews building permit applications which conform to the standards of the Planning Code by invoking the discretionary review process. A discretionary review is usually conducted in response to a request filed with the Planning Department by neighbors and/or neighborhood organizations of a project who believe that the proposed project

does not comply with the existing character of the neighborhood. In addition, the Planning Commission has designated certain types of permits as necessitating staff initiated discretionary review, chiefly when the loss of a dwelling unit is proposed or industrial uses are proposed to be displaced in Industrial Protection Zones. Neighborhood Planning staff reviews the discretionary review request and prepares a report for the Planning Commission outlining the facts in the case. At a public hearing, based on the merits of each case, the Planning Commission decides to approve the proposal as submitted, to modify it or to deny the building permit. During the past fiscal year, Neighborhood Planning staff reviewed 133 requests for discretionary review.

Preservation-Related Permit Reviews

Neighborhood Planning staff provides support to the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board (Landmarks Board) and the Planning Commission for the preparation and review of cases required to be in conformity with the preservation articles of the Planning Code. Besides the predominant types of cases described below, Neighborhood Planning Staff is responsible for other cases which need public hearings before the Landmarks Board including: review and comment on nominations of properties to the National Register of Historic Places (4 cases), review and comment on the effects federal undertakings could have upon historic properties per Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and as specified in federal regulations found in 36 CFR Part 800 (6 cases), review and

comment on the environmental effects of proposed development projects on cultural resources pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (5 cases). In addition, in the FY '99-'00 Neighborhood Planning Staff reviewed federally-assisted proposals covered by the 1982 Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement with the Mayor's Office of Community Development for impacts on historic resources as required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (40 cases), processed a Text Amendment to provide for Certificate of Appropriateness approval of alterations to City-owned parks, squares, plaza or gardens on landmark sites, where the designating ordinance identifies the alterations that require such approval, as well as a General Plan Referral for Union Square, and two cases to change the designated ratings of Downtown Area Plan buildings.

Preparation for hearings on cases to be heard by the Landmarks Board requires staff to: (1) maintain records, (2) conduct investigations and make field trips to properties, (3) consult with project sponsors, community groups and citizens on procedures and issues, (4) prepare case reports, memoranda and draft resolutions and motions, (5) present cases and recommendations to the Landmarks Board, (6) prepare final Landmarks Board resolutions and motions, (7) transmit case materials, as required, to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors, (8) make any necessary presentations at Planning Commission and Board of Supervisor hearings. The most

common types of cases, certificate of appropriateness, permit to alter, and landmark designations, are discussed below.

I. Certificate of Appropriateness:

A Certificate of Appropriateness (C of A) is the authorization designated city landmarks and buildings in historic districts require for exterior alterations requiring a permit and demolitions of a site or structure. In addition, in historic districts, as provided in the historic district ordinance, other types of exterior changes visible from a public street or other public place might require a C of A even when a permit is not required. The Landmarks Board must conclude its review by making a finding that the proposal does or does not result in a "significant impact upon, or is potentially detrimental to, the landmark site or historic district." The Landmarks Board provides its advice to the Planning Department. The Planning Department and the Planning Commission are the bodies which either approve or disapprove C of A application. In FY '99-'00, Neighborhood Planning processed 51 Certificate of Appropriateness reviews.

II. Permit to Alter

A Permit to Alter is the authorization required for major alterations of significant and contributory buildings identified in the Downtown Area Plan of the General Plan. The Landmarks Board provides its advice to the Planning Commission, which is the body which either approves or disapproves a Permit to Alter application. The Landmarks Board must conclude its hearing with a resolution to the Planning Commission which include findings that

the proposed use will not damage distinguishing original qualities or character defining features of the property, that the integrity of distinctive stylistic features that characterize the building be preserved, that deteriorated features be repaired rather than replaced, and in the case of contemporary additions that they be permitted, provided that they do not destroy significant exterior architectural material and be compatible with the building and its surroundings. In FY '99-'00, Neighborhood Planning processed 1 Permit to Alter review.

III. Landmark Designation

Designation of landmarks and historic districts is pursuant to the procedures set forth in Article 10 of the Planning Code. The Landmarks Board is one of four Boards or Commissions that is invested with the authority to initiate landmark designation. The Landmarks Board has established an active landmark designation work program, identifying each year up to eight sites, for Neighborhood Planning Staff to bring for its consideration of initiation of landmark designation reports prepared by staff, members of the Landmarks Board and the public. The Landmarks Board must make a finding that the resource merits landmark designation, and report its recommendation to the Planning Commission. In FY '99-'00, Neighborhood Planning processed 8 Landmark Designations.

Miscellaneous Permit Review

Some permit and license applications which are submitted to other departments, such as Police, Fire, Health or

Alcoholic Beverage Control permits, are referred to the Planning Department for review to determine conformity with the Planning Code and the General Plan. The Neighborhood Planning Unit reviews approximately 1300 miscellaneous permits annually.

Condominium and Subdivision Review

Divisions of land (subdivisions), new condominiums and condominium conversions are referred to the Planning Department by the Department of Public Works for a review of consistency with the General Plan, as required in the City Charter, the Subdivision Code and State Law. The City Advisory Agency (Director of Public Works), as lead agency on subdivisions, must disapprove any subdivision found to be inconsistent with the General Plan and must impose any conditions established for consistency with the General Plan. The final decision on subdivisions rests with the Board of Supervisors if an appeal is filed. The Neighborhood Planning Unit processed 55 subdivision requests and 306 condominium requests during the past year.

Other Permit-Related Reviews

The Neighborhood Planning Unit reviewed a variety of less common permit applications which have not been discussed above. In FY '99-'00 there were 121 such cases which fell into the following categories: Applications for Statement of Eligibility (12 cases), shadow fan analysis where no environmental review was required (74 cases), amendments to the General Plan (4 cases), Applications for Certification of Transfer of Development

Rights (14 cases), Coastal Permits (2 cases), General Plan Referrals (8 cases), Applications for Notice of Use of Transfer of Development Rights (1 case), and zoning reclassifications (6 cases).

Appeals to the Board of Appeals

The Board of Appeals hears appeals from the Zoning Administrator's decisions and determinations, other permit decisions resulting from the Planning Commission's exercise of discretionary review powers and building permit application approvals or disapprovals. Within the fiscal year, Neighborhood Planning staff spent significant time in preparing for and participating in 162 appeal proceedings.

Project Reviews

Each week, Neighborhood Planning staff participates in meetings where potential project applicants present proposed projects prior to the filing of official applications. The intent of these meetings is to inform project sponsors of Planning Code requirements and Planning Department policy concerns and to give potential permit applicants clear direction in developing and submitting projects for departmental review. Last year, Neighborhood Planning staff conducted 449 project review meetings.

NON-PERMIT RELATED ACTIVITIES

Planning Code Enforcement

The budget for FY '99-'00 reflected the Board of Supervisors and public desire to include Code Enforcement work within Neighborhood Planning teams. The TAC team reactivated Code Enforcement pro-

gram by reestablishing working relationships with other Departments involved with Code Enforcement, particularly the Department of Building Inspection, Health, Fire and Police Departments. During September 1999, the TAC conducted a neighborhood survey on enforcement issues. Based on survey results, and suggestions by the public at the Commission workshop in December 1999, the Commission established priorities for Code enforcement work. For the Southwest, Southeast and Northwest quadrants, the priority is for complaints involving illegal commercial activities in residential areas and for the Northeast quadrant, the priority is for unauthorized billboards. The priorities are further defined by the extent of impact of alleged violations.

In the Spring of 2000, TAC staff, assisted by Information Services staff, implemented computerized tracking of complaints, linked to the Department's parcel database, giving planners instant access to pending complaints. The TAC staff also developed standardized forms and procedures, in coordination with the City Attorney's office. TAC provided a number of training sessions for neighborhood planners on how to handle complaints. Resource materials also included an extensive referral list for complaints involving codes other than or in addition to the Planning Code.

During the year, the Department made several progress reports to the Board of Supervisors Finance Committee which was monitoring implementation of the Code

Enforcement program. 140 violation complaints were filed and logged into the tracking system during the year. The Department worked with the City Attorney on about two dozen enforcement cases.

Neighborhood Outreach and Education

The primary TAC effort on neighborhood outreach for last fiscal year was the survey on Code Enforcement issues sent to neighborhood and civic organizations in the Fall of 1999. TAC staff continued work on "user friendly" guides to Planning Applications with the goal of including these materials on the Planning Web page and having neighborhood teams utilize them at neighborhood meeting. Neighborhood Team leaders responded to invitations to attend several neighborhood organization meetings in each quadrant. The Citywide Planning group and consultants for that program developed extensive outreach to neighborhoods involved in the Better Neighborhoods 2002 program.

Permit Standardization and Streamlining

The Permit Streamlining Act is a state law that sets forth deadlines for public agencies to process and approve permit applications for development projects. The Act applies to a wide range of applications handled by the Planning Department including conditional use authorizations and building permits. The Act requires an agency to determine whether a permit application is complete within 30 days of filing. After a complete application has been received, the agency has between 60 and 180 days to act.

In February 2000, the Department responded to the mandate of the Permit Streamlining Act by receiving training from the City Attorney's office. The requirements were explained in more detail. To help planners with achieving timely processing, TAC staff began work on updating the Department's 1996 Procedures Manual and standardizing some of the operating procedures. TAC also initiated an expanded training program for new staff.

Letters of Determination

During the last year, the Zoning Administrator received a total of 212 written requests from the public to certify the zoning on a property, make an interpretation of the Planning Code or clarify issues pertaining to a property or a permit application. The Neighborhood Planning staff prepared letters of determination for 154 of these requests with the remaining 58 letters being answered by the Planning Information Counter staff within the Information Services Unit.

Preservation-Related Activities

In FY '99-'00 the Planning Department Work Program and Budget allocated resources for non-permit related preservation activities. Two of the work items were carried over to the FY '00-'01 due to the Neighborhood Planning Unit not being fully staffed during the fiscal year. Those items are the revision of Articles 10 and 11 of the Planning Code to improve the clarity and consistency of the permitting process and implementation of the Preservation Element, and the revision to the Programmatic Agreement for Section

106 work between the State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) and the City and County of San Francisco.

The Planning Department moved the Citywide Survey of Cultural Resources forward by focusing the Department's resources and efforts into re-thinking the methodology utilized for conducting a cultural resources survey. The Department convened outreach meetings with staff from OHP, members of the Landmarks Board and the preservation community. The year-long effort resulted in the Landmarks Board adopting the California Office of Historic Preservation Instructions for Recording Historical Resources as the Methodology for Historic Surveys. The Department submitted a grant to OHP to partially fund the survey. The grant was funded for work to begin in FY '00-'01. In addition, the Department revisited the South of Market Area Plan (Area Plan) survey or architectural resources conducted in the late 1980s and re-evaluated the significant buildings identified in the Area Plan.

In FY '99-'00 the Department accepted a work order from the Port of San Francisco to conduct historic preservation work for the Port of San Francisco on a full time basis and staffed the position.

Updating and Expanding Citywide Residential Design Guidelines

The Residential Guidelines, which were adopted by the Planning Commission in November 1989, are used by the Planning Department staff in reviewing residential building permit applications for neighbor-

hood compatibility. The checklist is also used by the planners to analyze design compatibility of projects which are heard at the Planning Commission Hearing under the Discretionary Review cases.

In response to the significant increase of residential construction activity in the City, and as well as an increase of discretionary review requests to the Planning Commission, the Planning Department believes that the current guidelines need to be improved to respond to neighborhoods' concerns, current Planning Code and Building Code requirements, and new construction materials and finishes available on the market.

The TAC team began work on the project to update and expand citywide Residential Design Guidelines in May 2000. The first step was to improve the Residential Design Review Checklist used by planners and incorporated in their reports to the Commission, by sending questionnaires to the planners in order to identify areas needing revision. The TAC Team will continue to work in updating and expanding citywide Residential Design Guidelines for FY '01-'02, using the checklist questionnaires as a basis for future revisions.

Due to the importance of developing design guidelines for the construction of new projects in the Industrial Protection Zone the Department created a manual that was renewed by planning staff, Neighborhood groups and the Design Community.

Conduct and Expand a Staff Training Program

In FY 99-00 the Tactical Team (TAC) took over the training function from the Neighborhood Planning Team Leaders. With over 30 new planners and support staff joining the Department during the fiscal year, it was necessary to provide a more structured approach to training for this large group.

The new comprehensive training program covered four areas: 1) learning the Planning Code; 2) learning procedures on implementing Planning Code requirements; 3) developing professional skills and 4) understanding the relation of other City Departments' regulations to the work of the Planning Department. TAC staff utilized experts from within the Department and from other agencies. The program consisted of over 45 sessions over a four to five month period. Classes were usually held two or three times a week. New staff members were required to attend. Although the program was directed mainly to Neighborhood Planning Unit staff, a number of new planners from other units attended as well.

The formal classroom training was combined with on the job training. Each newly hired Neighborhood Planning team member was paired with a more experienced planner for further guidance and support.

CITYWIDE POLICY PLANNING 1999-2000

Description, Function, Accomplishments, Goals

UPDATE AND MAINTAIN THE GENERAL PLAN.

Visualizing the General Plan

The Department, in cooperation with SPUR, began developing a smaller, more accessible summary of the General Plan for broad distribution. This document will help inform the public and decision-makers about the General Plan and the process of planning for change in San Francisco.

Updating the General Plan

The General Plan does not include a Land Use Element. Instead, land use policies are distributed throughout other General Plan elements. In order to better communicate the City's land use vision, the Department began work to create a Land Use Element. The first step was to examine adopted elements to identify and consolidate land use policies. This will lead to a more coherent and articulate statement of policies, and serve as a starting point for a public discussion about land use policy.

Maintaining the General Plan

The Citywide section of the Department assures adequate stock of hard copy General Plans, answers questions from the public about the General Plan, and conducts training for other staff on the General Plan. This is an ongoing activity.

COLLECT, UPDATE AND ANALYZE INFORMATION FOR PLANNING

Demographic information and Census 2000

The Department maintains and interprets demographic data for planning as needed. We coordinate with the Association of Bay Area Governments and the California Department of Finance, and respond to requests for demographic information from the public and City agencies. The Department is the official data affiliate of the US Census Bureau. Department staff serve on the "Complete Count" committee. This is an ongoing activity.

Land use information

The Department maintains a database of land use in San Francisco by parcel, using data from the assessor, the tax collector, Dunn and Bradstreet, the Department of Building Inspection and other sources. Updates based on field work occur in areas where the Department conducts planning studies. The database is coordinated with the citywide Geographic Information System (GIS) maintained by the Department of Public Works. During 1999-2000, the Department used its land use analysis and mapping capabilities to support the Transportation Authority's development of a countywide transportation model. During this fiscal year, the Department improved the land use database by incorporating "pipeline" information about planned and likely future development.

The Association of Bay Area Governments uses this information for its upcoming

Projections 2002, and as part of its Regional Smart Growth project. This information is also used in the land use planning projects described below.

Economic Information

The annual Commerce and Industry Inventory, published in December 1999, is a compilation of information to describe the city's economic activities by employment, establishments, transactions, and land use indicators. This information is presented in a format that allows for comparisons and cross-references among indicators and over time. Its goal is to make local economic data available to the public, the Department and other public and private agencies. In January 2000, the San Francisco Economic Summary, an interpretive publication, followed.

In addition, the department prepares population, housing, and employment forecasts and participates in the work of ABAG and other government agencies. The Department prepares background economic profiles for area plans as needed.

Housing data

The Department prepares an annual Housing Inventory. This annual series was initiated in 1967 to document changes in the housing stock from construction, demolition, and alteration permits. The report provides a consistent format for assessing housing production trends.

IMPLEMENT GENERAL PLAN POLICY - AREA PLANNING & PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Better Neighborhoods 2002

During 1999-2000 the Department began a program devoted to examining land uses in transit-oriented neighborhoods. Its goals include improving neighborhood livability and encouraging housing in appropriate locations. Work began on three areas: Central Waterfront, Market/Octavia, and Balboa Park. Data collection was undertaken. The selection process for urban design, economic, transportation and environmental consultants was completed. Coordination with city and other agencies continues. An extensive public outreach effort, including workshops, walking tours and bus tours is ongoing.

Waterfront Planning Coordination and Project Review

During FY 1999-2000, the Department helped coordinate the development of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission's Special Area Plan with the Port's Waterfront Plan and the General Plan, and participated in the review of Port Projects, including Piers 27-29, the Ferry Building, Rincon Park and the Pier 32 cruise terminal proposals.

Third Street Light Rail

During FY 1999-2000, the Department worked with MUNI on the design of the Third Street Light Rail line. In addition, staff coordinated with MUNI and the Redevelopment Agency on the design concept for Oakdale Plaza on the Third

Street Light Rail in the Bayview Commercial District, and for the connection between the plaza and the CalTrain Station several blocks to the west.

Analysis of Land Use Issues in Industrial Land, Development of Interim Controls, Promotion of Housing

During this Fiscal Year, rapid economic growth and related changes in the industrial districts of the City led to competition for land, rapid price increases for space, and land use changes. In response, the Department prepared a report, *Zoning Options for Industrial Land: Industrial Protection Zones and Mixed-Use Areas* in April 1999. This work formed the basis for an ongoing policy examination at the Planning Commission. The Department developed a set of Interim Zoning Controls, which were adopted by the Commission in May 1999.

Since then the Department has been examining potential permanent zoning controls to address these issues. This includes development and adoption of new zoning controls for lands presently zoned industrial; examination of existing and proposed zoning controls and policies in other areas; and development and adoption of coordinated policies, plans, programs and zoning controls to accommodate future housing, jobs, services and infrastructure needs of City, in appropriate locations.

Neighborhood Commercial Controls

Several Neighborhood Commercial District issues addressed in FY 1999-2000: alcoholic beverage licensing issues,

in-lieu findings, notice requirements, and amendments to the Neighborhood Commercial zoning in the 9th and Irving Neighborhood Commercial area. Code amendments to the Inner Sunset Neighborhood Commercial District were initiated. The Planning Commission adopted them in FY 2000-2001.

Board of Supervisors proposed legislation. The Department reviews amendments to the Planning Code and Interim Controls initiated by members of the Board of Supervisors, and prepares them for Planning Commission review when needed. During FY 1999-2000, the Board initiated at least five Planning Code Amendments, including the Jobs-Housing Linkage Ordinance.

IMPLEMENT GENERAL PLAN POLICY - CITYWIDE TRANSPORTATION, RECREATION/OPEN SPACE AND OTHER CITYWIDE POLICIES

Transit Impact Development Fee

The Department began an investigation of applying the TIDF (which applies only to office) to other uses, and extending it to other land uses citywide. An RFP was prepared and consultant selection begun in FY 1999-2000. Analysis and the preparation of a proposed fee structure continue in FY 2000-2001.

Transportation Management Association, Transportation Brokerage

Staff continued to work on the implementation of measures to improve the transportation alternatives available to San Francisco residents and workers, including

the Trip Store, Non-commute projects, the Commute Club, and the Car-sharing program, and the maintenance of transportation programs in downtown buildings.

Transit Preferential Streets

Staff continued to participate with MUNI and DPT in the design and implementation of projects including signal pre-empt, contra-flow, bus stop and bus lane projects and traffic calming.

Downtown Pedestrian Projects

Staff continued to plan for the continued implementation of improvements for Downtown streets and alleyways as an important part of the downtown Open Space System. This included planning for Belden Street, Ecker Alley, and the Downtown Signage program.

MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS 1999-2000

Description, Function, Accomplishment, Goals

The Major Environmental Analysis (MEA) section of the Planning Department (referred to in the San Francisco Administrative Code as the "Office of Environmental Review") is responsible for the City's compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and consists of between 15 and 18 professional staff with expertise in transportation and environmental issues. CEQA requires a thorough analysis of all development proposals, plans, and legislation that may have significant physical environmental impacts. In San Francisco, particularly relevant environmental topics that require in-depth analysis include transportation issues, air quality (including wind and shadow), geology/seismicity, hazardous materials, and cultural (historic) resources.

Environmental Review Training, Support & Coordination

MEA managers seek to provide training and supervision that would allow new and old staff to perform at their highest potential. An ongoing process, staff development continues to show results in terms of the quality and quantity of work accomplished. Updating procedural guidelines, such as the Transportation Guidelines for Environmental Review, has been initiated, as has an update to sections within the San Francisco Administrative Code related to CEQA.

Future efforts will focus on keeping environmental review practices up to date, and will ensure that MEA continues to provide accurate and objective information and analysis to decision-makers who use environmental documents to inform their decisions.

Effectively communicating CEQA requirements and procedures to members of the public and to City staff is one of MEA's top priorities, and is accomplished via coordination with other departments and agencies, as well as direct interaction with project applicants and other members of the public.

Categorical Exemptions

Projects that are determined to be exempt from CEQA review require no further analysis by MEA staff, and are often documented by a simple letter or notice of exemption. The performance target for processing exemption requests is five days, and is regularly met on all but the most complex projects. Updated guidelines related to exemption determinations were recently prepared by MEA staff and adopted by the Planning Commission.

Negative Declarations

If a project is not exempt from environmental review, the staff of MEA performs an in-depth analysis of potential project impacts, which may lead to imposition of mitigation measures. Should the conclusion of the analysis be that the project (with agreed upon mitigation measures) could not have a significant environmental effect, then a negative declaration is prepared. The determina-

tion documented in the negative declaration is appealable to the Planning Commission.

The performance target for negative declarations is 12 to 16 weeks from submittal of an EE application, to issuance of the preliminary negative declaration. Despite staff vacancies and case backlogs, this target has been met on all but the most complex cases, most of which require background technical studies that can extend the time involved in the analysis.

Environmental Impact Reports

If the in-depth analysis of project impacts results in a determination that significant environmental impacts may occur, then preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required. EIRs generally take about 12 months to complete, and are required for large and complex projects. The number and complexity of large cases processed as EIRs increased in FY1999-2000, and involved efforts by a majority of current MEA staff. In all, about 15 major EIRs were completed or certified over the course of the year, including some concerning long awaited projects such as the Hunters Point Shipyard, and some concerning downtown development proposals for office and retail projects. Countless additional studies — including major EIRs — were initiated concerning a variety of private development proposals, and public projects such as the San Francisco International Airport (SFO) runway reconfiguration proposal.

Transportation Studies

Transportation issues play a role in almost every environmental review undertaken by MEA, and often require a detailed assessment by an outside consultant. MEA staff supervises development of a scope of work, as well as the overall conduct of transportation studies prepared by outside consultants. Performance targets specify two to three weeks for review of consultant submittals, and are routinely met, except where complex issues require ongoing consultation between staff and consultants. During Fiscal Year 1999-2000, MEA staff made progress on updating staff and consultant guidelines for transportation studies, and made a commitment to accomplish greater coordination with staff of MUNI and DPT.

INFORMATION SERVICES DIVISION FY 1999-2000

Information Services Division is composed of three sections: the Planning Information Counter (PIC), the computer support section (OASIS) and a small graphics unit. Additionally, this division draws heavily on the Department's Records Room and other functions related to and staffed by the Administrative Division. Among these more miscellaneous responsibilities is the both the direct staff work and oversight responsibility of complying with Measure G the Sunshine Ordinance and staffing the Department's non-profit support group Friends of City Planning.

Planning Information Counter

The Department's information counter (PIC) handles all questions about zoning, land use, Planning Commission and Departmental policy, environmental review, landmarks and transportation. The public, neighborhood groups, community agencies, developers and other government departments may either phone, drop-in or query the Department through the internet. A core staff of five full-time Planners, 35 Planners (rotating into shifts) and two interns handle all inquiries. Currently, over one hundred phone inquiries and over fifty drop-ins are handled per day. Staff also answer written requests for Letters of Determination that seek either more comprehensive information or that have need for memorialization. Support staff maintains a constantly updated listing of the City's neighborhood groups and voluminous informa-

tional handouts. Other written materials and maps are available upon requests. Finally, the PIC serves as a training and in-service training ground for both new and veteran staff, so that they may learn the City's Planning Code (San Francisco's Zoning Ordinance), the Comprehensive Plan, all important land use policies and the procedures and workings of the Planning Department.

Office of Analysis and Information Systems

OASIS, the Department's computer support section administers and manages the computer network so as to ensure continuous operation and upgrades. This year the Department has expanded from a Local Area Network to a Wide Area Network, with staff now being stationed in two separate locations. This section maintains the Department's network connection to other departments, access to the internet and the City and County's intranet, electronic mail and mainframe data. This section also trains new staff in all programs and applications and develops customized software applications such as the Department's Time Accounting System, the Case Tracking and Parcel Information Database, the Electronic Sign-in Board, and the Decision Document Generator. Databases are updated and expanded and new applications and programs are developed and installed. Both the Computerized Planning Code and the Electronic General Plan are maintained and updated by this section. One notable new program is the computerization of the Nonconforming and Limited Commercial Use records into a database

accessible to all staff. Finally, this section increases public access to documents and forms at the Department and assists with compliance with Measure G, the Sunshine Ordinance.

Graphic Support and Training

This section provides Department-wide graphic support and training, including generation of special reports, publications, General Plan Elements, Planning Code graphics and map production. All Department Maps, including complete City aerial photos, are made available to the public on a drop-in basis through this section.

Neighborhood Planning Yearly Permit and Case Workload Comparisons

TYPE	FY 1998-1999		FY1999-2000		INCREASE/DECREASE	
	Number	Hrs/Case	Number	Hrs/Case	Number	%
Project Reviews	425	2.00	449	2.00	24	5%
Letters of Deter.	158	2.00	150	2.00	-8	-5%
Building Permits	2651	6.50	3352	6.50	701	21%
Certificate of Appropriateness/Permit to Alter	51	14.04	36	12.51	-15	-42%
"Beauty Pageant" per Section 321	9	62.25	12	57.41	3	25%
Conditional Use	134	47.04	183	41.80	49	27%
Discretionary Review	108	17.26	133	21.36	25	19%
Environmental Review	13	15.89	1	15.89	-12	-1200%
Federal Environmental Review	0	0.00	10	-	10	100%
Designate or Redesignate Building Rating	0	0.00	1	-	1	100%
Proposition M Review	1	15.89	1	49.25	0	0%
Institutional Master Plan	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0%
Application for Statement of Eligibility	24	10.00	12	7.69	-12	-100%
Shadow Study	73	4.71	74	2.78	1	1%
Landmark or Historic District	8	60.75	5	81.63	-3	-60%
Master Plan Amendment	0	0.00	4	86.25	4	100%
Application for Certificate of Transfer	13	15.89	14	2.31	1	7%
Coastal Permit	0	0.00	2	2.00	2	100%
Condominium (New or Conversion)	218	1.17	306	1.40	88	29%
Master Plan Referral	5	13.60	8	24.48	3	38%
Subdivision of Land	72	4.52	55	2.94	-17	-31%
Zoning Text Change	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0%
Unclassified (previously Tier III, NCSUDs)	0	15.89	0	0.00	0	0%
Variance	230	17.09	136	16.63	-94	-69%
Development Agreement Applications	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0%
Exception to Downtown Controls per Section 309	13	82.71	10	99.13	-3	-30%
Application for Notice of Use of TDR	1	3.50	1	7.50	0	0%
Zoning Reclassification; Setbacks	2	20.25	6	2.00	4	67%

